

Wendella Ault Battey, State Board of Labor Relations

Confirmation Hearing April 3, 2014

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee. My name is Wendella Ault Battey, and I want to begin by thanking Governor Dannell Malloy for recommending my re-appointment for another term as a member of the State Board of Labor Relations. It is with great honor that I graciously accept my re-appointment.

I must also thank the members of this committee for considering and voting upon my re-appointment. I am very grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve the State of Connecticut in what I believe to be one of the most important and challenging aspects of our state's economy – The Labor Sector.

Nineteen years ago I was asked to consider serving on the State Board of Labor Relations, and as you can see, I have not left. At that time I committed to being a public servant. But what I've come to realize over the almost two decades is that this is more than a job to me. I love what I do because it is important. Back in 1995 when I was first appointed to this Board, I had only a year earlier started my solo law practice and was a new mom. I didn't know whether I could juggle a law practice, a new baby and my commitment to public service. The only thing I was sure about is that I could not and would not fail at either. I am happy to say that as I stand before this committee today, indeed I have been successful in both my private practice, my continued commitment as a public servant at the Labor Board, and that new baby from 1995 is now a freshman at Uconn. I am proud indeed.

The reason I believe I've been successful at balancing my private practice and my public service is because I am surrounded day-in and day-out with the most capable and professional group of folks at the Labor Board. This not only includes the Agent, Assistant Agents, General Counsel and Assistant General Counsel, but the administrative staff who also understands the importance of the work we do, and whose commitment to that work is unparalleled.

Administering and policing Connecticut's labor statutes by a bipartisan board with the collective years of experience is critical to the sustained stability of the labor industry. No time is this more important than the current economic challenges facing Connecticut, our Nation and the World at large.

As a Board, we are often faced with many difficult issues arising out of collective bargaining. Many of these issues are fact driven and yet, they may have derived from the economic, social or political issues facing the parties. We see the Board's charge as an opportunity to sustain the policies created by our prior case law and precedent, rather than chart a new course based on current issues. Even faced with this increasingly difficult task, our Board must continue to strive to maintain the integrity of the collective bargaining structure in both state and municipal labor relations statutes. This is a task I hope to continue to get better at.

Once again, I thank the Governor and this committee, for its trust in me in my continued service to the labor community and in my abilities to carry out the mandates of the state's labor statutes.

Respectfully,

Wendella Ault Battey